

Minutes of the Planning Commission Regular Meeting of Tuesday, September 19, 2017
Council Chambers, One Twin Pines Lane, Belmont, CA

ROLL CALL 7:00 P.M.

Planning Commission members Present: Simpson, Hendrix, McCune, Goldfarb, Meola, Majeski,
Mates

Planning Commission members Absent: None

Staff Present: Community Development Director de Melo, City Attorney Rennie, Senior Planner
Gill, Principal Planner DiDonato, Temporary Administrative Assistant Hernandez

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Led by Chair Mates

COMMUNITY FORUM ON ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

No speakers came forward.

COMMISSIONER ANNOUNCEMENTS / AGENDA AMENDMENTS

City Council Meeting of September 26, 2017 - Commission Liaison Hendrix, Alternate Majeski

Community Development Director deMelo stated that some agendas show the order for tonight as
Bishop Road being the last item of the meeting; the final item is the Sidewalk Policy, and Bishop
Road is the first and only Public Hearing item.

CONSENT CALENDAR

- A. Draft Meeting Minutes April 4, 2017
- B. Draft Meeting Minutes June 20, 2017
- C. Draft Meeting Minutes July 6, 2017
- D. Draft Meeting Minutes July 18, 2018
- E. Draft Meeting Minutes August 15, 2017
- F. 10 Notre Dame Place – Extension of Single Family Design Review Approval

ACTION: On a Motion Made by Commissioner Simpson, Seconded by Commissioner McCune
Approving the Consent Calendar.

Passed (7/0)

Resolution 2017-33

SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

NONE

PUBLIC HEARINGS

BISHOP ROAD - CERTIFYING A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE AND A MITIGATION MONITORING AND REPORTING PROGRAM FOR A FOUR-LOT VESTING TENTATIVE PARCEL MAP ON BISHOP ROAD; (APN: 043-021-010 & 380) (APPL. NO. 2016-0039).

Chair Mates polled the Commission for ex-parte communications regarding the project, Commissioners indicated that site visits were made but no ex-parte communications were made.

Senior Planner Gill outlined the staff report regarding the project.

Senior Planner Gill stated that the applicant proposes a four-lot subdivision that will include three residential lots and a fourth lot consisting of 6.2 acres of permanent open space and a relocated fire road off Bishop Road.

A Conditional Use Permit is being requested to allow a clustered development, which includes the reduced lot sizes and a variance related to open space requirements. The applicant is requesting the variance, which is an increase of 2,500 square feet of developable lot area than what is currently allowed by the zoning code, to provide future tenants a more usable backyard, which would otherwise be very limited.

The goals and policies of the San Juan Hills Area Plan and General Plan include protecting public views of hillsides, encouraging Clustered Development, and protecting and providing open space adjacent to and on Sugarloaf Mountain from Bishop Road.

The Single-Family Design Review findings are that the project minimizes disruption of existing public views and protects the profile of the prominent ridgelines, it is well defined and articulated, the tree removal and grading is reasonable, and the landscape and tree plan is appropriate.

Three (3) protected trees would be removed and six (6) preferred species trees are to be planted. The criteria supporting removal is the proximity to proposed structures and removal is necessary to construct improvements.

Staff recommended adopting a Resolution approving the Vesting Tentative Parcel Map, Conditional Use Permit, and Variance. Staff recommended adopting a Resolution approving the Single-Family Design Review, Grading Plan and Tree Removal Permit. Staff additionally recommended approving a Resolution certifying the Mitigated Negative Declaration and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program.

Hari Sripadanna, the architect for the development as well as his project design team, Land Planning Concepts, Sigma Prime Geosciences and MacLeod & Associates were present to answer questions.

Hari Sripadanna stated that the project location presented unique challenges for them because public views of the hills had to be maintained as well as designating 6 acres of open space.

Bruce Chan, Landscape architect. Mr. Chan indicated that the features of the plan with the 50-foot setback offers a buffer zone. Plants are strategically placed so they soften up the house and do not block the view to Sugarloaf Mountain from the street.

Hari Sripadanna stated that the project would preserve views of the hillside and open space areas from Bishop Road by stepping the homes down and into the hill; the project includes providing permanent open space and clustering of single family homes. If the variance was not requested and approved, homeowners would not have any rear yard due to the 10,000-square foot limitation of the site development; a rear yard is essential to the value and enjoyment of the natural beauty of the site.

Commission discussion ensued regarding the City Council approving the relocation of the fire road. Senior Planner Gill stated that currently there is an existing fire road, however, the site development conflicts with the fire road. Senior Planner Gill further stated that the fire road cannot be impeded and the applicant will need to request approval from the City Council to relocate the fire road within the proposed public open space parcel. Senior Planner Gill stated the relocated fire road will be an easement that is granted to the city; however, until such time the owners own the eight (8) acre site, they will need to maintain access to the fire road.

City Attorney Rennie stated that the Commission can approve the parcel map contingent upon the City Council approving the relocation of the fire road.

Commission discussion ensued regarding the front of the property, landscape terrace and retaining walls as being considered open space. The project includes an Open Space Management Plan which designates what areas of the property can be developed, and which areas need to remain as open space. The Management Plan in the front yard would allow natural landscaping, California native species plants with stacked stone.

Discussion ensued whether an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) could be built in the open space in the front of the property.

City Attorney Rennie stated that it is not possible because the state wouldn't allow an ADU to be built on a site that is already at its floor area limit.

City Attorney Rennie confirmed that the City's definition of open space doesn't necessarily mean nature preserve and for the Conservation Easement that the City requires, open space isn't public access, it is private open space in the content of our code; the City does not give someone permission to enter private property that has an open space easement.

Chair Mates opened the public hearing.

Warren Gibson, Belmont resident, spoke in support of the project.

Peter Gabrovsky, Belmont resident, spoke in support of the project.

Chair Mates closed the public hearing.

Discussion ensued regarding the general design of the homes; some Commissioners were hopeful that the developer could adjust the design, so the homes were more distinctive from one another.

Commissioner Hendrix stated he likes the project, thought it was creative, and it made sense that the homes were set back from the road. He understands the reason for needing the additional square footage and the backyard, especially with a home that size.

Commissioner Hendrix indicated that he believed the private open space issue would typically be an exception, and not the norm.

Commissioners stated that all Resolutions should include that the fire road be kept 100% open during construction.

Commissioner discussion ensued regarding the single-family design review. Commissioners suggested adopting the resolution with an additional condition that applicant work with staff to try and get a little more design variety in the three houses.

ACTION: On a Motion Made by Commissioner Goldfarb, Seconded by Commissioner Majeski Certifying a Mitigated Negative Declaration of Environmental Significance and a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program for a Four Lot Vesting Tentative Parcel Map on Bishop Road. (APN: 043-021-010 & 380) (APPL. No. 2016-0039).

Passed (7/0)
Resolution 2017-34

ACTION: On a Motion Made by Commissioner Goldfarb, Seconded by Commissioner McCune Approving a Vesting Tentative Parcel Map, Conditional Use Permit, and Variance for the Subdivision of an Existing 8.2-Acre Lot into Four New Lots on Bishop Road (APN: 043-021-010 & 380) (APPL: NO. 2016-0039).

Passed (6/1) (Meola, No)
Resolution 2017-35

ACTION: On a Motion Made by Commissioner Majeski, Seconded by Commissioner Goldfarb Approving a Single-Family Design Review, Grading Plan, and Tree Removal Permit for a Minor Subdivision on Bishop Road (APN: 43-021-010 & 380) (APPL: NO. 2016-0039).

Passed (6/1) (Simpson, No)
Resolution 2017-36

Chair Mates stated that the action is appealable within 10 calendar days.

Break taken

OTHER BUSINESS / UPDATES

Informational Memo Report: Administrative Sidewalk Installation Policy – Requirements for Development Projects.

Principal Planner DiDonato stated that this was an Informational item and that no Planning Commission action is required. Planning staff summarized background and policy. The Sidewalk Policy was created by the Public Works Department and is relatively new. The Administrative Sidewalk Installation Policy is intended to provide guidance to property owners and city staff.

Gilbert Yau, Senior Engineer was present to answer questions from the Commission. Staff stated if the Commission had any questions that can't be answered this evening, staff will document the questions and provide an answer later.

Sidewalks can be deferred to a future date in certain circumstances or sidewalk installation requirements may be waived by the City Engineer in certain circumstances.

The Complete Streets Policy has an exception clause that the Commission liked.

Community Development Director deMelo gave updates regarding projects in Belmont. The first hotel, the Marriott Springhill Suites opened September 11, 2017, CSUS has been opened since August and other projects are in various stages of construction. Autobahn Motors is set to open February 2018, and spring 2018 is the target date for completion of the gas station/mini mart/carwash at the corner of Ralston and Old County Road.

Community Development Director deMelo stated that October 2nd has been scheduled for the Planning Commission adoption hearing for the General Plan Update policy documents. The first set being presented are the 2035 General Plan Update, the Phase 1 Zoning that implements the General Plan, the Climate Action Plan and the Final Environmental Impact Report. The Belmont Village Specific Plan and the Belmont Village Zoning will be brought to the Commission on a separate night. Both meetings will be an Open House Format, and include story boards, information stations, etc. He indicated that these meetings are a good opportunity for the public to ask staff or the consultants any questions that they may have.

He indicated that the goal is to move some of the documents to the City Council at their meeting on October 24, 2017. The Belmont Village Specific Plan and Belmont Village Zoning will be on the Planning Commission agenda on October 17, 2017. Should the Commission finish these documents, they would then go to the City Council's November 14, 2017 meeting.

In response to a Commission question, Community Development Director deMelo stated that the response to comments, including the Final Environmental Impact Report components are almost complete. The City received approximately 30 comments, and are creating a matrix of all comments and responses that were received. Staff also needs to make some recommendations about various map edits.

City Attorney Rennie commented that several housing bills made it through the State Legislation, fifteen (15) in total. A few bills could have some substantial changes of how the City reviews projects. Some will also have some impact on Accessory Dwelling unit's and low-income housing.

ADJOURNMENT: at this time being 10:05 P.M. to a special meeting of the Planning Commission to be held on Monday, October 2, 2017.

Irma Hernandez
Temporary Administrative Assistant

Meeting televised and web streamed.